

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 288 467

HE 020 967

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TITLE The Democratization of Higher Education in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden: A Cross-National Study of Post-War Reforms.
PUB DATE Oct 86
NOTE 50p.; Paper presented at the Midwest Meeting of the International and Comparative Education Society (Chicago, IL, October 17-18, 1986).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; *College Administration; *Comparative Education; Decentralization; Democratic Values; Educational Change; Foreign Countries; *Governance; *Government School Relationship; *Higher Education; *Institutional Autonomy; Participative Decision Making; Policy Formation; Public Policy
IDENTIFIERS Denmark; Finland; Iceland; Norway; *Scandinavia; Sweden

ABSTRACT

The extent of democratization of Scandinavian higher education is evaluated. Democratization is considered to include: (1) the subordination of university decision-making to parliamentary democracy and, in Sweden, to corporate representative bodies; (2) the decentralization of higher education regionally, important particularly in Finland, Norway, and Sweden; (3) equal access to college on the basis of class and gender; and (4) the internal democratization of university decision-making. The rationale underlying the distributive choices made by policymakers is also assessed. The conceptual framework for the analysis is stated by Heidenheimer, Heclo, and Adams in "Comparative Public Policy." Post-war educational reforms in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden are examined for four categories of social choice: choices of scope, choices of policy instruments, choices of distribution, and choices of restraints and innovation. The analysis suggests that Norway and Sweden have been the most successful in democratizing higher education. Denmark and Finland, while implementing significant reform measures, generally have failed to equal the level of democratization reached by Norway and Sweden; and Iceland lags behind its neighbors. (SW)

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THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN
DENMARK, FINLAND, ICELAND, NORWAY, AND SWEDEN:
A CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY OF POST-WAR REFORMS

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Prepared for delivery at the Midwest Meeting of the International and Comparative Education Society, October 17-18, 1986, DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois.

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It has often been argued that a peculiarly Social Democratic welfare state model has been created in Nordic Europe, one based on a blend of egalitarian principles and economic concerns. Heckscher (1984) maintains that educational reform is the cornerstone of the model; it provides a means to level social inequalities and, at the same time, make citizens more productive in the labor market. The post-war reforms also modified internal university decision-making; they transformed hierarchically structured systems into ones where faculties, students, and administrative staffs and, in Sweden, corporate interests have the opportunity to influence university policy.

There is little, if any, doubt that elitist systems that once characterized higher education in the Nordic countries have been altered significantly. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the extent to which Scandinavian higher education has been democratized. Democratization, as discussed in the paper, includes four distinct elements: (1) the subordination of university decision-making to parliamentary democracy and, in Sweden, to corporate representative bodies, (2) the decentralization of higher education regionally, important particularly in Finland, Norway, and Sweden, (3) the equal access to higher education on the basis of class and gender, and (4) the internal democratization of university decision-making. It is also an attempt to assess the rationale underlying the distributive choices made by policy-makers.

The analysis will be made within the conceptual framework

set forth by Heidenheimer, Heclo, and Adams (1983) in Comparative Public Policy. Post-war educational reforms in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden will be examined with reference to four categories of social choice: (1) choices of scope, (2) choices of policy instruments, (3) choices of distribution, and (4) choices of restraints and innovation.

Choices of Scope

In general, Nordic universities developed according to the traditional European model. Pedersen (1981) writes that institutions of higher learning "were financed by the state [and they] served the needs of the state for an educated elite" (p. 447). He explains that although these institutions were primarily state supported, they enjoyed a high degree of autonomy. Professors were the central actors in university administrative matters; they were highly respected and considered well-qualified to control university affairs. However, significant reforms were implemented during the 1960s and 1970s which threatened traditional university life. Students, junior faculty (faculty below the rank of professor), and administrative staff pressed for far-reaching reforms; at issue was the democratization of university governing bodies. The student activism which was sweeping across Western Europe became part of the Scandinavian experience; protest movements, mass demonstrations,

and student sit-ins forced government officials to draft new legislation. While the equalization of representation became an immediate concern, the equalization of educational opportunity was an ongoing one.

With the exception of Iceland, which gained independence in 1943, it seems reasonable to assume that traditional higher educational policy has developed along similar lines throughout post-war Nordic Europe. Each nation is rather homogeneous culturally, religiously, and linguistically, except for Finland which has approximately 305,000 Swedish-speaking citizens. And, while significant cleavages exist between socialist and non-socialist ideologies, there is a general belief that all people have an inherent right to social benefits such as education, health care, and worker pensions.

Politically, there are also numerous similarities. Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden are all parliamentary democracies. All are unitary states with unicameral legislatures.¹ Decisions are made by the cabinet in each country; and, party discipline is quite strong.

Social Democratic parties, generally credited with welfare reform, have played an important role in Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish politics for many years. The Social Democrats are weakest in Iceland; however, since the 1930s, the Independence party has supported welfare reform.

Since 1924, the Social Democratic Party in Denmark has been

the largest party in terms of voter support; it has been a partner in coalition governments for over forty years (1929-1943, 1947-1950, 1953-1968, 1971-1973, and 1975-1982).² Since 1966, the Finnish Social Democratic Party has been a partner in all but one coalition government. And, except for a brief period in 1936 and between 1976 and 1982, Social Democrats have dominated Swedish politics since 1932. In Norway, while the Labor Party has provided the impetus for social change, all other major political parties support social programs which are considered essential to the modern welfare state.

The bourgeois parties in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden initially opposed comprehensive social welfare reform. However, Heckscher (1984) and Logue and Einhorn (1985) explain the nonsocialist parties, rather than opposing humanitarian ideals, feared the national economies would be unable to handle expansive welfare programs. According to Heckscher (1984), once the fears abated, most parties accepted welfare state principles. He also advances a second argument: the bourgeois bloc, aware of strong public support for Social Democratic reform, realized it was prudent to cooperate. In either case, by the mid-1950s, few withheld support for comprehensive social welfare reform; disagreement, for the most part, was reserved for the means rather than the objectives. In fact, Logue and Einhorn (1985) report a number of public policies, including governmental support for education, were initiated by the nonsocialist parties

after they took power in Denmark in 1968, Norway in 1965, and Sweden in 1976.

Despite the similarities in the cultural and political structure of Scandinavian society, governmental response to social and economic pressures varies cross-nationally.

Choices of Policy Instruments

In centralized political systems, policy is formed at the national level; Heidenheimer, Heclo, and Adams (1983) explain that change "arises . . . from negotiation among political bureaucratic, and social elites" (p. 32). Since change requires governmental attention and approval, there is a significantly higher degree of uniformity throughout each nations' higher educational system than there is in a country like the United States.

Prior to the period of educational reform, universities throughout Nordic Europe were relatively autonomous. Decisions affecting most aspects of university life were made within each institution. According to Heidenheimer (1977), as enrollments soared and labor market demands changed, "states and their party and bureaucratic representatives [were] increasingly compelled to rationalize and integrate their educational institutions" (p. 413).

Centralized planning, in Finland, emerged as a consequence of rapid growth; the Ministry of Education wished to gain control over financial and academic matters. However, by 1975, the rectors and student leaders of various institutions joined in an effort to defend university autonomy. They have succeeded to an extent; plans developed at the national level are based, in part, on suggestions submitted by each institution. Nonetheless, the trend toward centralization remains strong. The universities and colleges are administratively subordinate to the Ministry of Education and a number of ad hoc committees.

The Icelandic Ministry of Culture and Education has become increasingly involved in educational policy-making. Although the university and colleges have some freedom in deciding the content of study programs, the ministry maintains tight control over all other administrative matters.

Prior to 1960, Danish publicly funded universities were only indirectly controlled by the Folketing. However, rising student enrollments and government expenditures forced legislators to reassess the government's role in higher education. Legislation passed during the 1970s slowly eroded university autonomy. For example, Pedersen (1977) explains that prior to the passage of the Management of Institutions of Higher Education Act (1973), "curricular requirements, although issued by the Ministry of Education, were in fact developed by the university itself" (p. 339). The legislation significantly altered this

practice; university boards of study now make recommendations to a central board which, in turn, channels the proposals through the ministry. The legislation specifies that neither disciplines nor subjects may be "altered unreasonably." A report issued by the OECD (1980b) suggests that policy-makers would like to be more responsive to local and regional preferences, but they want to maintain certain levels of competence throughout the system. They fear that decentralization might lead to the breakdown of academic standards (Hansen, 1976).

Recent reforms made by the Swedish authorities have been in response to pressures caused by an expanding educational system and a changing labor market. In response to the former, the government enacted legislation to streamline decision-making; it set relatively uniform standards concerning budgeting, admission policy, and the composition of university governing bodies. The National Board of Universities and Colleges supervises and coordinates the higher educational system; it serves as a link between the institutions and the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. Under this system, universities and colleges have varying degrees of freedom depending on the policy area. In the late 1970s, six regional boards were created to help plan and coordinate universities at the local and regional levels. University interests are represented by faculty and students and public interests are represented by politicians, trade union members, business leaders, and agrarian workers. The government

wants to ensure that university programs are developed in concert with labor market needs. Critics charge that the new reforms jeopardize university autonomy, while reformers hold that the new policies decentralize decision-making (Premfors, 1982).

In Norway, as in all other Nordic countries, the central government sets the basic framework for institutions of higher learning. However, universities, as a matter of tradition, have the right to decide what courses to offer and to determine requirements for examinations and degrees (Norwegian Ministry of Church and Education, 1982). Similar to the Danes and Swedes, Norwegians generally hold negative attitudes toward centralized decision-making. Many believe if institutional policies were standardized, scholarship would suffer. The government's efforts to enact common university legislation have failed. For example, in 1969, the Ministry of Church and Education proposed legislation which would have required standardized examinations. The University of Bergen and the National Union of Students (SFS) led the fight against uniform regulations. After a series of negotiations, the government passed a bill which gave universities the right to propose changes in regulations. It also reemphasized the right of institutions to determine the content of study programs.

While most policy decisions are made by central government agencies, each country has managed to retain a degree of control over certain administrative matters. (Figure 1) However, as

Heidenheimer (1977) explains: ". . . [P]olitical elites everywhere [have] moved to reduce and circumscribe the subsystem autonomy which educators had managed to secure in previous eras" (p. 414).

Figure 1: Higher educational decision-making in Scandinavia

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
Budget approval					
University spending					
Curricula control					
*Admission policy					
	 State	 Shared	 Institutional		

*In Norway, admission policy is formulated by each institution and approved by the government. In Sweden, institutions, working within government guidelines, decide what quotas to impose for admission to certain study programs (e.g., economics, law, and religion).

Choices of Distribution

"Whereas economic markets arrive at distributive choices by letting costs and benefits be wherever they happen to fall, the political process makes such choices in a much more self-conscious manner" (Heidenheimer, Heclo, & Adams, 1983, p. 13).

What motivated decision-makers to restructure higher education? Was the equalization of educational opportunity, viz. the equal access to higher education on the basis of class and gender and the decentralization of higher education regionally, a byproduct of economic growth or was it a purely egalitarian to reform an elite-oriented system?

While no one would argue that egalitarian principles were not a significant factor in the efforts of government planners to reform higher education, these concerns were often secondary to economic considerations. Egalitarian concerns outweighed economic considerations in both Iceland and Norway; the opposite was true in Denmark and Finland. Sweden's reform efforts seem to have been a balance of the two.

Although there is little information available regarding Icelandic educational reform written in English, a report issued by the Ministry of Culture and Education (1981) explains that the "basic principle in Icelandic education is that everyone should have the equality of opportunity to acquire the education best suited to the aptitude and ability of the individual" (p. 1). Only recently has the government given serious thought to the relationship between education and labor market needs.

Norwegian higher educational policy has its foundations firmly rooted in egalitarian principles. According to public officials, "the quest for greater equality in education has

been a main theme" (Norwegian Ministry of Church and Education, 1976, p. 167) in the country's educational objectives throughout the twentieth century.

Observers suggest Norwegian attitudes and beliefs have been, and continue to be, a significant determinant in policy formation:

Historically, the egalitarian tradition in Norwegian society may simply have its origin in extremely poor economic conditions. For many centuries the country was isolated and without the resources needed to support an upper class. Farms were many and small, and even if rural society had its social ranking, poverty was shared by most. Wealth was just acquired through industrial development, gaining momentum only relatively late, in a European context, and through the expansion of trade and shipping. (Norwegian Ministry of Church and Education, 1976, p. 99).

Second, OECD examiners (1976) explain that Norwegian attitudes are grounded on the Protestant ethic; in general, "this has meant a fundamental and universal commitment to literacy and an affirmative attitude towards education and its benefits" (p. 13). As important, Norwegians consider public participation in decision-making both a necessity and a duty; consequently, they are active participants in decisions which involve social reform.

The Norwegian government also responded to pressures felt similarly throughout Nordic Europe. Student enrollments had increased dramatically; labor market demands were changing; and, the urban-rural gap was widening. Most students of Scandinavian

politics, however, agree that the basic thrust for educational reform can best be traced to egalitarian principles.

The government, in an effort to correct social and economic imbalances, expanded the institutional network. Regional colleges which offer vocationally oriented programs were established in ten areas. Students, however, have expressed doubts concerning the value of shorter degrees; many consider these colleges to be "schools of last resort." Government officials are "extremely aware" (Norwegian Ministry of Church and Education, 1976, p. 174) of prestige rankings, but they are also aware that change is initially difficult to accept.

The expansion of higher education in post-war Denmark is considered to be a result of politically determined objectives. Pedersen (1977) writes:

Denmark experienced an unprecedentedly [sic] high rate of economic growth in the late 1960s and the following decade. Education was . . . seen as a worthwhile investment, which Danish society could well afford, as could the individual citizens. The increased level of welfare and affluence provided waves of educational demand during this period. (p. 341).

While growing public belief in the equality of educational opportunity certainly influenced the government's decisions, there were other factors to be considered. Policy-makers had three basic objectives: remain competitive in the world market, sustain a high standard of living, and further develop social welfare programs. If these goals were to be accomplished, the

nation's youth had to be educated. In short, Whitehead (1985) suggests "[t]he impetus behind the democratization of Danish higher education has been economic growth" (p. 71).

Governmental reforms broadened the access to higher education: admission requirements were liberalized, financial aid programs were established, and new institutions were built. However, by 1974, the Liberal minority government was forced to reassess Denmark's expansionist policies. According to OECD examiners (1980b), government officials, in reaction to the rising unemployment rates among university graduates, believed it was necessary "to monitor supply and demand, to ensure that resources [would be] equitably distributed and applied with optimum efficiency, and to try to achieve a better balance between student subject choices and labour market openings" (p. 56). In 1976, the Social Democratic minority government passed legislation which authorized the Minister of Education to regulate university admissions.

By 1978, little had changed. Further emphasis was placed on coordinating study programs with labor market needs and increasing importance was put on developing vocational programs. Many suggest that frequently changing governmental coalitions, combined with slow economic growth, have severely restricted the scope for progressive educational reform (OECD, 1980b).

In Finland, greater access to higher education is only partially attributable to public demands. Educational reform is,

for the most part, a product of former President Kekkonen's domestic policy initiatives. OECD officials (1982) explain that the reforms were the foundation for the government's regional development program. Kekkonen, an Agrarian, was interested in integrating Finland culturally and economically. Regional institutions, located outside the traditional educational centers of Helsinki and Turku, would serve a number of functions: they would help stimulate provincial industrial growth which, in turn, would create new job opportunities, researchers would be better equipped to understand and address local community needs, and young people could be trained to apply modern technology to local business problems. Moreover, Kekkonen believed Finnish educational and research standards had to be raised to meet those of the most progressive European systems, if the country were to remain competitive in the world market. Throughout the 1970s, Kekkonen relied on Center-Left coalition governments to support his domestic policies.

A new phase in the development of Finnish higher education began in the 1980s; like policy-makers in other Nordic countries, government officials were forced to reassess their ambitious programs. In general, the government's plans include halting growth and shifting priorities. Efforts are being made to match study programs to labor market needs; as such, emphasis is being placed on vocational training rather than traditional university studies.

The Swedish experience is a blend of social and economic policy initiatives. Husén (1969) suggests that the "Social Democrats took only a marginal interest in reforming education during their first decade of political power" (p. 479). They were primarily concerned with achieving full employment and efficiently redistributing valued resources. Educational reform, although important in principle, had to wait; many university trained Swedes could not find work and additional graduates would only compound the unemployment problem. However, by 1945, educational reform and academic research standards became a major political issue.

According to Marklund and Bergendal (1979), both private and public sector demand for people with professional skills "grew at an unprecedented rate" (p. 32). By the early 1950s, government policy-makers feared the number of university and college graduates would fall short of those needs. In an effort to ensure institutions would have an adequate number of applicants, the government decided to relax entrance requirements for selected study tracks.

Several groups, most notably the Swedish Federation of Professional Employees (SACO), forecasted an oversupply of graduates from the open faculties, viz. humanities and social sciences. Government planners were caught in a dilemma. While it was likely expanding enrollments during the 1960s would eventually lead to an excess of qualified people, the immediate

situation was quite different. Heidenhiemer (1978) reports that students did not perceive the possibility of a jobless future since "[t]he demand for university-educated technicians, statisticians, and economists . . . was always much greater than the supply" (p. 67). New graduates, as well as those who had not completed their studies, found employment. How could the government now limit enrollments when its policy during the last fifteen years had been to create educational opportunities? It was not politically feasible.

Meanwhile, the increase in the number of places in faculties with restricted admissions (i.e., medicine, dentistry, and engineering) failed to create a balance between student enrollments and Sweden's needs and student preferences and university selection. This was due, in part, to the more stringent entrance requirements for professional programs. Students having completed three years of study in a gymnasiaskola could enroll in any free faculty study program, whereas students applying to closed faculty were judged on their grade point average. Marklund and Bergendal (1979) explain that many students were forced to choose other programs which had less rigorous requirements; as a consequence, more students were channeled into an already overcrowded system.

The government, in an effort to resolve the problems precipitated by the rapid growth of the educational sector, charged the 1968 Educational Planning Commission (U 68) with the task of

developing comprehensive plans to correct the imbalances. Initially, U 68 was noncontroversial. The only objection from the nonsocialist parties, according to Premfors (1979), "concerned the composition of the commission: they wanted it to be less influenced by top-level bureaucrats and correspondingly more responsive to members of parliament" (p. 83).³ However, when the U 68 report was issued in 1973, there was little consensus between the political Left and Right. (Figure 2)

Figure 2: Swedish party reaction to the U 68 proposals

Policy	Left					Right				
	VPK	SD	CP	FP	MSP	VPK	SD	CP	FP	MSP
* <u>Numerus clausus</u>	■	□	■	■	■					
+Governing board representation	□	□	▤	■	■					
Regional development	□	□	□	■	■					

□ Agreement ▤ Moderate Opposition ■ Strong Opposition

*The numerus clausus would apply to all faculties.

+Opposition to representation of public interests (e.g., labor organizations and business groups on university governing bodies).

Source: Adapted from information in R. I. T. Premfors, "The Politics of Higher Education in Sweden: Recent Developments, 1976-1978," European Journal of Education, 14, 81-106.

Abbreviations: VPK (Left-Party Communists); SD (Social Democratic Party); CP (Center Party); FP (Liberal People's Party); MSP (Moderate Unity Party).

The Social Democrats needed the support of an opposition party if the U 68 reforms were to be written into law; the Center Party was, by far, the most logical choice.⁴ Like the Social Democrats, the Centrists were in favor of regional development; historically, they had opposed the concentration of resources and opportunities in a few urban areas (Ruin, 1982). Center opposition to restricted admission did not pose a serious threat to the working relationship. The concessions the Social Democrats had to make were minimal. The U 68 proposal specified that a majority of seats on the governing boards of institutions should be held by those representing the public interest. A compromise was reached whereby public representatives would hold one-third of the seats on the boards of institutions and two-thirds of the seats on regional boards (Premfors, 1979).

While the controversial across-the-board quota system remained intact, the U 68 commission emphasized that student preferences, as well as market forecasts, would be taken into consideration by government planners. In reality, the compromise legislation closely resembled the U 68 proposals submitted two years earlier.

The 1975 Higher Education Act, supported by the Social Democratic and Center parties, provided the framework for the subsequent legislation passed by the bourgeois coalition government in 1977. The only significant policy reversal involved the reinstatement of a free sector.⁵ Ruin (1982) writes:

The Centre Party seems to have prevailed over the Conservatives and Liberals in formulating the new government's policy for higher education. It was aided, however, by the momentum of a reform already underway. The implementation had gone too far in reaching the principles enacted in 1975. (p. 359).

Although it might seem that economic interests outweighed egalitarian concerns, most students of Scandinavian politics argue otherwise (Anderson, 1975; Heidenheimer, 1977, 1978; Premfors, 1978, 1979). According to Premfors (1979), Conservatives, Liberals, Centrists, Social Democrats, and Centrists alike agreed that higher educational policy should "further economic growth, social equality, and cultural development" (p. 82). Their goal was "to satisfy [both] student and labor market demand" (Premfors, 1979, p. 82).

By late 1960, legislators throughout Nordic Europe were also pressured to democratize internal university governing structures. While earlier reforms in Iceland, Norway, and Sweden had extended limited participatory rights to faculty and students, governmental policies during the reformist years prompted the various academic communities to seek parity.⁶ Teaching responsibilities were divided unevenly between full professors and junior faculty; the government increased its control over curricula development; across-the-board quotas were imposed; and, administrative staff, for the most part, remained disenfranchised.⁷ Each government responded differently to the demands made by university communities.

Whitehead (1985) explains, "Danish universities, unlike their counterparts in many modern European countries, had traditionally been under the authority of the Crown rather than Parliament" (p. 58). By 1901, indirect parliamentary control had been established; however, the legislature chose to distance itself from internal university affairs. Universities had always enjoyed a relatively high degree of autonomy; any attempt by the government to interfere with internal decision-making would have been considered a threat to academic freedom.

Professors played a dominant role in university policy matters; they made decisions concerning research priorities, curricula content, and faculty hiring. By 1968, the relationship between professors and other faculty had become a serious problem. In an effort to keep pace with rising enrollments, full-time teaching staff increased nearly fourfold; professorships, however, increased at a much slower pace. According to Pedersen (1977), universities were in jeopardy of losing talented young scholars. If promotional opportunities were not available in Denmark, the younger generation might seek employment in either Western Europe or the United States. Junior faculty also found it increasingly difficult to work within a system where antiquated hierarchical structures excluded them from decision-making. Many simply believed that a number of professors no longer provided intellectual leadership (Pedersen, 1977; Whitehead, 1985). Young teachers who found themselves in

academic exile demanded the right to sit on university governing bodies.

Meanwhile, the 1968 student strike at the University of Copenhagen united students and junior faculty in an effort to democratize university government. Initially, the Minister of Education remained detached from negotiations. According to Pedersen (1977) and Whitehead (1985), the government had been reluctant to modify university administrative units; it only decided to become involved after the university rector, Mogens Fog, had negotiated a settlement. The compromise reached at Copenhagen provided a guideline for the Management of Universities Act (1970) which established two new internal administrative bodies to be composed of an equal number of students and faculty of all ranks.

Conservatives, Liberals, and Radical Liberals supported the bill, while the opposition parties either voted against it or abstained. The political Left had favored the one man-one vote principle which was being debate in the Finnish Parliament. Three years later, however, all parties on the Left-Right spectrum voted for the Management of Institutions of Higher Education Act. The new legislation extended participatory rights to technical and administrative staff; representation on the governing bodies was based on a 2:1:1 faculty-student-staff ratio.⁸ Pedersen (1977) considers the reforms a "pragmatic political compromise" (p. 358). He explains that faculty and students acquiesced to the inclusion of administrative staff on university

governing bodies; it is likely "the concession was . . . based more on tactical and pragmatic considerations than on principles of justice and equity" (Pederson, 1977, p. 358). It was also a compromise for the Left; the one man-one vote principle really never had the support necessary for passage.

Like their counterparts throughout Scandinavia, Finnish students pressed for internal university reform. Pesonen (1982) points out that student demands coincided with the "reorganization of the political system" (p. 377); "[f]or the first (and only) time the political Left received a majority of seats" (p. 376).⁹ Three months after the Social Democrats took office, the government issued a decree on the future development of universities; although the language was somewhat ambiguous, the decree specified the need for widespread participation in university decision-making. By 1967, the government had enacted legislation pertaining to the administrative units at the University of Jyväskylä. Student and faculty representatives were to be included on intermediate level and lower level bodies, while full professors were to remain the sole occupants of seats on the highest governing organs. Shortly thereafter, similar legislation was passed for the University of Tampere.

Prior to 1968, students had not actively sought university reform. According to Pesonen (1982):

. . . [D]iscussions about student participation in internal university affairs concerned so-called study councils, advisory co-operative bodies of both student

and teacher representatives, which had consultative functions about all matters of immediate concern to students, such as teaching and course requirements. (pp. 368-369).

Following the the National Union of Student's endorsement of universal suffrage, Finnish student associations made the one man-one vote principle its primary objective. For the next four years various attempts were made to reform university decision-making.

The government, in general, had been in favor of democratizing university governing units; however, there was little consensus within and between the parties concerning the degree of shared responsibility. In addition to Lex Virolainen, the Social Democratic minority government's first attempt at comprehensive university reform, various opposition parties as well as a group of Social Democrats proposed alternative legislation. Lengthy debates and opposition filibustering ended the government's hope of passing any legislation. Lex Itälä, the Center minority government's attempt at university internal reform, suffered the same fate. The government had tried to reach a compromise which would appeal to both the Left and Right, but little progress was made before Parliament was dissolved in late 1971. Lex Sundqvist, the third attempt at institutional reform, was the most radical; the Social Democratic draft bill contained the one man-one vote principle for all levels of university government. However, during the second reading of the bill,

one man-one vote was changed to tri-partite representation. The Centrists were the only party to support the legislative measure; according to Pesonen (1982), the bill "was too 'diluted' to satisfy the Left and it was too radical to please the Right which did not desire university councils with universal suffrage" (p. 384).

By 1973, the Ministry of Education was forced to reorganize the administrative bodies of three private universities that were being transferred to state control. Interim decrees were issued which established tri-partite councils with equal representation of professors, junior faculty and staff, and students. In 1976, further attempts were made to restructure university decision-making along the lines suggested by Virolainen; again, the government failed to reach a consensus on the division of authority. Pesonen (1982) believes, in time, the tri-partite arrangement will be codified.

The Norwegian experience was somewhat different. Midgaard (1982) writes:

Since the beginning of this century there has been a general trend in Norway towards broader participation in university government. . . . Readers were made members of the faculty councils long before the events of 1968, and both academic staff below the rank of reader and the students were represented in a way that was found satisfactory by these groups themselves. (pp. 317-318).

Since the 1920s, students also have been active in many other

facets of university life; they are responsible for student housing, student health services, food services, and university book stores.

University growth in the 1960s, however, created an uneasy situation. Junior faculty and students, alike, demanded representation on all university governing bodies. Subsequent reforms, though, differed from institution to institution. Oslo and Bergen were the oldest universities; both had well-entrenched hierarchical structures. Authorities at Trondheim, concerned over the recent integration of other institutions of higher learning, wanted to maintain separate administrative units. Officials at Tromsø, the newest university, had made an early commitment to establish what they believed to be a meaningful division of authority. It was the only university to include representatives of society-at-large on high level governing bodies; public interests account for approximately 5 percent of board membership.

Decisions regarding educational reform, much the same as any other social issue, involve widespread public participation. The government, by tradition, is committed to base its final decision on proposals made by interested parties; in this case, the universities submitted draft bills on internal reform to the Ministry of Church and Education. Hence, while the government attempted to establish a uniform organizational pattern throughout the system, it only succeeded to a degree.

Midgaard (1982), however, cautions that "the role of the

central government should not be underestimated" (p. 321). For example, the Collegium, the highest university administrative unit, at the University of Oslo favored the differentiation of voting rights; it wanted faculty to have the exclusive right to vote on matters concerning appointments and academic degrees. The Labor government disagreed; it held that all members of a governing body should have the right to vote on all issues. Labor's position was further strengthened by the intensive lobbying efforts of students and nonacademic staff. Currently, students hold seats on all university governing bodies; and, while the proportion of student representatives on each board varies, students have the right to vote on all matters. In accordance with the government's general commitment to democratize university decision-making, similar legislation was enacted for Bergen, Trondheim, and Tromsø. As expected, the composition of governing units at Tromsø "defines the present limit of participation in Norwegian [u]niversities" (OECD, 1976, p. 29). Student representation varies between 25 and 30 percent at each institution; students and nonacademic staff, together, account for at least 50 percent of the membership on the boards (Midgaard, 1982; OECD, 1976).

Sweden's response to demands for internal university reform differed from its neighbors'. Like their counterparts in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Norway, Swedish professors dominated university governing bodies. While they had significantly more

authority than other members of the academic community, responsibilities were divided, albeit unevenly, on both lower and intermediate level administrative units. For example, departmental decisions were made by the prefekt (departmental chair) in consultation with a committee composed of all departmental faculty and two student representatives.

Swedish students were not new to the political arena. According to Ruin (1982), the SFS, in the late 1940s, had been "invited to comment officially on proposals for legislation as well as to nominate representatives for membership on royal commissions" (p. 336). During the reform period, the SFS's lobbying efforts were as intense as the trade unions' (Heidenheimer, 1978; Ruin, 1982).

In 1968, junior faculty, in reaction to increased teaching responsibilities, students, in reaction to tighter government control over curricula, and administrative staff, in reaction to their disenfranchisement, pressured policy-makers to correct the imbalances on university governing bodies. The government responded quickly. The democratization of internal university structures coincided with its policy objectives. As important, it wanted to avoid any unnecessary confrontations. Three months after the government appointed members to the U 68 Commission, the Cabinet requested the Chancellor of the Swedish Universities to design a plan for internal reform. For approximately seven years, universities throughout Sweden participated in experimental reforms developed by the Chancellor's office (Ruin, 1982).

Representation, in general, had been increased across all levels of university government.

It came as somewhat of a surprise to university students and personnel when the government decided to postpone its final decision on structural changes until the U 68 Commission issued its report. It was a serious setback for faculty and students when the commission specified that public interests should be represented on both internal and external governing bodies. Faculty and students joined in opposition to the plan; Liberals, Conservatives, and to a lesser extent, Centrists also objected to the idea. It was the Center that forced the government's concession regarding the ratio of university representatives to public representatives.

None of the other Scandinavian universities faced this particular "threat" to their autonomy. Conservatives and Liberals in Norway favored the inclusion of society-at-large representatives on internal governing units, while the Socialist Election Alliance tacitly supported the inclusion of trade union representatives; the idea, with the exception of the University of Tromsø reforms, never passed the debate stage (Midgaard, 1982). In Finland, the government was strongly opposed to outside representation on high level administrative bodies (Pesonen, 1982).

Regardless of the faculty-student-staff ratio and the presence or absence of public representatives on university governing bodies, policy-makers in all five countries succeeded in

increasing participatory rights. The question remains whether governmental policies have equalized educational opportunities.

Choices of Restraints and Innovation

Heidenheimer, Heclo, and Adams (1983) write:

[Choices of restraint and innovation] become particularly applicable when significant change in the character of constraints poses questions about how to continue, terminate, or adapt policies which had been implemented in light of preceding choices. In one direction choices can go toward toughening the prevailing rules regarding the extension or extraction of resources and benefits; in the other they can go toward experimenting with new techniques. (p. 13).

Throughout Scandinavia, university enrollments, student expectations, and labor market demands soared during the post-war years. Governmental officials responded by liberalizing admission requirements and creating educational institutions beyond the traditional university borders. By the mid-1970s, central governments, academic communities, and labor markets were showing signs of strain. Resources were spread too thin; academic excellence was eroding; and, university graduates were having trouble finding jobs. The latter problem was, in part, a result of the attitude that university graduates have a right to a job for which they were trained.

A decade has passed since the most significant and, at the same time, the most controversial higher educational reforms

were enacted. How have the students fared?

Scandinavian higher education, for all intents and purposes, is cost-free. Minimal fees are applied toward student welfare programs such as health and counseling services. All students are eligible for study funds given in the form of grants and loans. Whether students chooses to attend a state or private institution, they have the right to both forms of financial aid.¹⁰ Even in countries where student requests are means-tested (i.e., Sweden), the amount of aid is calculated solely on the basis of the student's income and assets. Free tuition, government grants, and low-interest loans have given students who would otherwise be unable to attend college the opportunity to increase their marketability. However, student aid, by itself, has not been a panacea for social and economic disparities.

Post-war educational policies liberalized admission requirements. Students with less than a traditional three-year upper-secondary education gained access to universities and colleges. (Figure 3) Government planners had a dual objective: broaden the access to higher education for children from working-class families and stimulate economic growth. As long as a student had the necessary credentials he or she could select any program in the humanities, social sciences, or natural sciences.

Figure 3: University and college admission requirements in Nordic Europe

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
Upper-secondary leaving certificate	X	X	X	X	X
^a Subject-specific aptitude tests	-	X	-	-	X
^b Vocational training	-	X	X	X	-
^c Work experience	X	-	-	X	X
Native language and English	X	X	X	X	X
Individual assessment	X	-	X	-	-
^d <u>Numerus clausus</u>	X	X	X	X	X
^e Entrance examinations	-	X	X	-	X

^aSpecial admission requirements may apply to particular study programs or courses.

^bFinland takes vocational training into consideration on a case by case basis. Iceland requires vocational training for admission to technical engineering at the Technical College of Iceland. Norway requires vocational training plus five years work experience in lieu of a leaving certificate.

^cDenmark takes work experience into consideration on a case by case basis. Norway requires vocational training and five years work experience in lieu of a leaving certificate. Sweden requires applicants to be twenty-five years old with four years work experience and the equivalent of two years English at the upper-secondary school level.

^dRestricted admissions apply to all faculties except selected study programs in Norway.

^eThis test is optional for applicants who qualify on the basis of age and work experience.

Growing student enrollments in the 1960s and 1970s caused policy-makers to reevaluate the overcrowded and somewhat antiquated education system. (Table 1) The Norwegian government created regional colleges both to alleviate the pressure felt by the universities and to develop highly specialized programs which would cater to regional labor market needs. In Denmark, the Folketing passed legislation that sanctioned the creation of university centers which would offer medium-term and short-term programs. This was partially in response to growing demands on the traditional universities; but, it was also an effort to create opportunities for those previously excluded from continuing their education. Government planners believed that it was no longer feasible "to rely on the training of graduates for a few well-defined professions at a time when post-secondary education [was] evolving from a elite institution into a mass system of education" (Hansen, 1976, p. 11). Government officials also believed that students who were most apt to become discouraged with their studies and either change programs or leave school prematurely might be more inclined to complete a shorter, more focused track. Finland responded to a changing society by restructuring its higher educational system. Legislative action accorded many existing institutions university status and private universities were transferred to state control. Sweden reacted similarly. Universities found it difficult to cope with growing demands for student places and housing and faculties

found it difficult to adequately handle increased teaching responsibilities. The Riksdag, following the recommendation of a special commission on universities and professional colleges, approved the creation of four branch campuses; two additional universities were also established. Swedish planners had many of the same concerns as government officials in Finland and Norway:

There was evidence of the influence the proximity factor exerted both on recruitment to higher education and on where graduates chose to live during their subsequent professional careers. Geographical proximity was, in fact, increasingly important because higher education also sought to recruit older students and because both spouses in young families were increasingly likely to have gainful employment. (Marklund & Bergendal, 1979, p. 41).

Have students benefited from the reform measures? On the surface, yes. In all five nations enrollments among those graduating from upper-secondary schools, as well as students who come via vocational training or through a combination of work-study experience, have increased significantly. For example, in Denmark, university enrollments increased more than 105 percent between 1960 and 1980 (Danish Ministry of Education, 1983). Finnish enrollments for the same period rose over 240 percent (OECD, 1982). The number of Norwegian upper-secondary school graduates tripled between 1960 and 1980; of those students, over one-half matriculated at universities and colleges. The number of students in universities and professional colleges increased an impressive 233 percent in Sweden between 1960 and 1970.

The 1970 student enrollment in the social sciences alone exceeded the total number of students in all institutions of higher learning just ten years earlier (Heidenheimer, 1978).

Table 1

University Expansion in Nordic Europe*
1960 to 1985
(Population in Thousands)

	1960		1985	
	Number of Universities	Population per University	Number of Universities	Population per University
^a Denmark	2	2500	5	1023
^b Finland	3	1428	17	287
Iceland	1	169	1	235
^c Norway	2	1765	4	1031
^d Sweden	4	1858	6 [10]	1388 [833]

*State operated universities.

^aThere are also three university centers at Odense, Roskilde, and Alborg.

^bThe restructuring of the higher educational system accounts for the increase in universities. In many instances the universities are not identical to the traditional institutions, but more like the Norwegian regional colleges.

^cRegional colleges are not included in these figures.

^dBracketed numbers include university annexes.

Sources: Population information from Europa Yearbook (1984). London: Europa Publications. World Almanac (1960). New York: New York World Telegram.

Can any student who has fulfilled the necessary prerequisites attend college? In theory, the answer is yes; in reality, the answer is quite different. It might seem as though the expansion of higher educational facilities has increased the likelihood of applicants being admitted to the institution and program of their choice. However, a greater number of places does not necessarily guarantee anything except that more students can attend college. When university graduates no longer met labor market needs and educational expenditures took a greater proportion of the gross national product, most governments made an unpopular decision. All countries, with the exception of Norway, imposed restrictive quotas on all faculties. Applicants in Denmark and Sweden must overcome an additional barrier, computerized rankings.

How have these reforms affected the selection process? According to Heidenheimer (1977): "In periods of rapid educational growth, it proved difficult to find selection mechanisms which would sharply increase the representation of lower-class students" (p. 431). Consequently, children from upper-class backgrounds, as well as children from working-class families, benefited from governmental reform. While governments report only modest shifts in student enrollments, Anderson (1974) cautions against making hasty judgments:

Lower-status families are so numerous that even large changes in their share in the student body could only imply small rises in their rates of student

attendance. But only a few added upper-strata students can yield large rises in their ratios to the parental spectrum. (p. 172).

Nonetheless, the changes have disappointed most policy-makers. For example, Finland, acknowledged by some as making the greatest advances in equalizing educational opportunity, reports only small changes in social selectivity (OECD, 1982; Skard & Haavio-Mannila, 1984). Between 1961 and 1980, the number of university entrants from middle-class and upper-class families dropped from 36 to 31 percent, while the number of matriculant from working-class backgrounds increased from 26 to 28 percent. When analysts divided the population into two categories, upper-level employees and businessmen and skilled and unskilled workers, they found that children from families in the first category were nearly six times more likely to pursue an advanced education. Norwegian experts detected a similar shift. As more students were brought into the system, the number of children attending universities from working-class and agricultural backgrounds increased; however, approximately 41 percent of all college students still come from middle-class and upper-class families (OECD, 1976).

Class differentiation is even more pronounced in the prestige faculties. In general, "sub-elite" (Anderson, 1975) students and women are underrepresented in medicine, dentistry, and engineering and overrepresented in education, journalism, and social work.

Data from a Danish National Institute of Social Research survey suggests a student's chance to pursue an advanced education remains heavily dependent on parental socio-economic status. Educational levels are "repeated from one generation to another" (OECD, 1978, p. 60); for example, children of university graduates most probably will pursue a traditional higher education, children of working-class parents normally will receive vocational training, and children of unskilled workers will remain unskilled. This trend is seen throughout the Nordic countries (Heckscher, 1984; OECD, 1976, 1980b, 1982; Rehn, 1984).

Women, as a group, have fared somewhat better. Discussion is underway in Sweden and Norway to selectively impose a "piggy-back" numerus clausus on disciplines having either a disproportionate number of men or women. Sweden recently enacted legislation banning sex discrimination in higher education and Norway is considering similar legislation which includes "radical" quotas for certain fields where women are grossly underrepresented. At present, preference is given in Norway to women seeking admission to male-dominated field such as economics. Finland has been more successful than the other countries in correcting the gender imbalance; 54 percent of all first degrees are earned by women (OECD, 1982). In Norway, women account for 31 percent of university enrollments; but, they earn only 17 percent of all undergraduate degrees (OECD, 1976). It is too early to gauge

how the shift in emphasis from traditional studies to more vocationally oriented programs will effect recruitment patterns for both groups, women and students from working-class families.

Summary

The foregoing analysis suggests that Norway and Sweden have been the most successful in democratizing higher education. Denmark and Finland, while also implementing significant reform measures, generally have failed to equal the level of democratization reached by the other two countries. Iceland, with only one university, lags behind its neighbors in two important respects, viz. the university's subordination to government planners and the lack of equal representation for faculty, students, and staff on university governing bodies. (Figure 4)

Following the major higher educational reforms enacted during the 1970s, universities in Norway and Sweden managed to retain the greatest degree of decision-making autonomy; both kept full control over university spending and partial control over curricula development and admission policies. Danish universities share the responsibility for university spending with the Ministry of Education; however, like Finland and Iceland they have little, if any, control over admission policies.

Finland, Norway, and Sweden have been more successful than

Denmark and Iceland in decentralizing higher education regionally. Prior to 1959, Finnish institutions of higher learning were concentrated in Helsinki and Turku. There are currently seventeen universities, including those in the eastern, western, and northern regions. Norway, in addition to two new universities, established a network of ten regional colleges which offer vocational courses at the university level; the government plans to build six more to meet local needs. Sweden broadened its educational system by expanding four facilities and creating four university annexes and two new institutions of higher learning. Denmark added one university and established three university centers which offer two programs, one for the traditional student and one shorter study track.

The democratization of internal university decision-making also varies cross-nationally. Denmark, Norway, and Sweden appear to have designed three of the more equitable systems. In Denmark, faculty members control 50 percent of the seats on governing bodies and students and administrative staff each hold 25 percent of the remaining positions. Representation in Norwegian universities differs from institution to institution; students and nonacademic staff, however, comprise at least 50 percent of the total membership of all governing units. Swedish officials adopted a variation of the tri-partite system: equal numbers of faculty, students, and corporate interest representatives sit on all university education and program committees.¹¹ Internal

university decision-making in Finland is based on a tri-partite system which allows professors, junior faculty and staff, and students equal representation on all governing structures. The arrangement at the University of Iceland is the least equitable; junior faculty has only limited participatory rights and administrative staff has no representation.

Figure 4: Level of democratization of higher education in Scandinavia*

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
Decision-making autonomy					
Regional Decentralization					
Internal Democratization					
Equal Access Gender					
Equal Access Class					
Primary Motivation	EC	EC	EG	EG	EC-EG

 High
  Moderate
  Low

*The level of democratization assigned to each country reflects the advances the country has made relative to the other four.

Abbreviations: EC (Economic considerations); EG (Egalitarian considerations); EC-EG (Balance of economic and egalitarian considerations).

The results of greater access to higher education based on gender and class are more difficult to evaluate due to the lack of comparable data. In general, all governments formulated policies to broaden the access to higher education. Recent reports suggest Finland has achieved the greatest equality of results by correcting the gender imbalance among university graduates; however, Finnish women, similar to women in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, remain underrepresented in a number of prestige faculties and in post-graduate work.

The two countries which have made the most significant advances in higher educational reform have similar priorities. Norwegian policy initiatives are based primarily on egalitarian principles. Regional development was meant to correct educational disparities between young people from university towns and those from outlying areas. Swedish lawmakers balanced egalitarian concerns with economic considerations. All political parties on the Left-Right spectrum acknowledged that higher educational policy should equalize social disparities and, at the same time, further economic growth. In both Finland and Denmark, economic considerations outweighed egalitarian concerns. Danish government planners, in an effort to sustain a high rate of economic growth and strengthen social welfare programs, broadened the access to higher education for all groups. Finnish legislators wanted to integrate the country culturally

and economically. Part of their plan was to stimulate provincial industrial investment and teach students how to apply new technology to local business needs. Icelandic policy, based primarily on egalitarian ideals, resulted in only modest changes.

Every choice a government makes affects members of society differently. Scandinavian higher educational reform, irrespective of political motives, leveled a number of inequalities. In the process, however, university autonomy was eroded and institutions retained decision-making authority in precious few areas. Critics charge that centralized control has had deleterious consequences. They share Anderson's (1974) belief that universities have become nothing more than "organizations for inculcating specialized skills in accordance with the opinions of anonymous officials" (p. 174).

Many fail to acknowledge the positive aspects of change. Comprehensive reform at all educational levels has opened university doors for a number of students once excluded from post-secondary training; economically underdeveloped areas are benefiting from regional expansions; and, internal university decision-making has been democratized.

NOTES

¹Following the Icelandic general elections, the Althingi is divided into an upper and lower chamber. All legislation must pass both houses. The Althingi, as a single unit, considers parliamentary motions, parliamentary questions, and the budget. Similarly, the Storting is divided into the Lagting (upper chamber) and the Odelsting (lower chamber). Most general legislation in the Norwegian Parliament is considered separately by both chambers.

²Between 1973 and 1975, Denmark had a Liberal minority government and in 1982 and 1984 the Center Democratic, Christian People's, Conservative, and Liberal parties formed minority coalition governments.

³Only high-level bureaucrats held seats on the U 68 Commission; its members included the Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of Education, the Chancellor of the Swedish Universities, and the general directors of the National Board of Education and the National Labor Market Board (Ruin, 1982). Students, educators, political parties, trade unions, and businesses were able to express their views through their representatives who sat on one of five reference groups (Heidenheimer, 1978).

⁴According to Premfors (1978, 1979), the Swedish Social Democrats were unable to rely on Communist Party support on matters concerning educational policy.

⁵December 1978, the Riksdag enacted legislation that imposed restrictive quotas on all faculties effective July 1979 (OECD, 1980a). See Premfors (1978, 1979) for a detailed account of both governmental deliberations and policy modifications between 1976 and 1977.

⁶Education in Iceland never became a serious political issue which caused division along party lines. According to Pedersen (1981), students gained limited participatory rights as early as 1957 and, in 1969, they were given the right to elect two representatives to both the university senate and faculty board. "Since 1976 [students] have controlled one-third of the vote in the election of the university rector" (Pedersen, 1981, p.450). Junior faculty are given only modest participatory rights.

⁷Norway did not impose restrictive quotas on all faculties.

⁸The Management of Institutions of Higher Education Act (1973) also created a central board of studies which is responsible for the coordination and control of the various university administrative boards.

⁹The discussion of the democratization of internal university decision-making in Finland is based on Pesonen's (1982) excellent article, "Finland: The 'One Man-One Vote' Issue." His account of university reforms is one of a limited number translated into English.

¹⁰Norway extends the same privileges to students attending private institutions. Information is not available on student aid policy.

¹¹According to the U 68 report, members from the municipal and county educational systems, as well as other politicians may hold seats on university governing bodies "where applicable" (Cf. "The Reorganization of Higher Education in Sweden," 1974).

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